

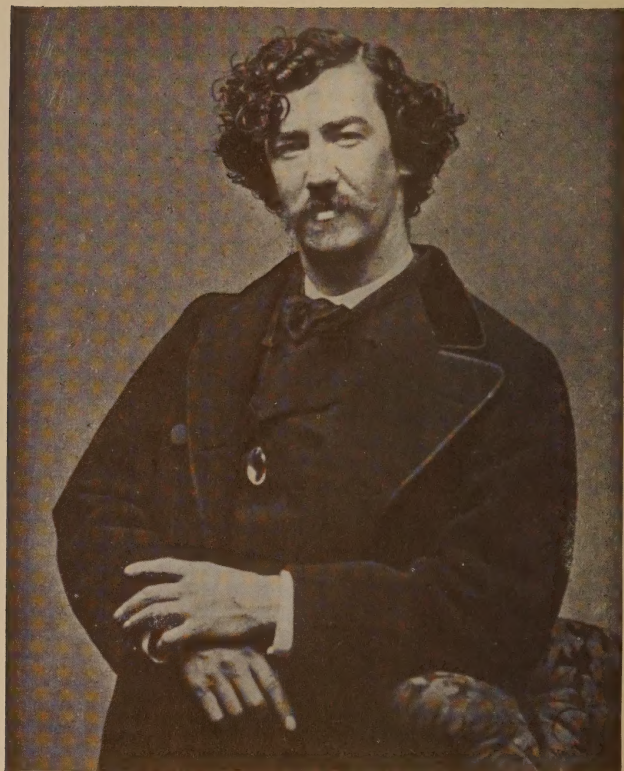
DISTINGVISHED
AMERICAN ARTISTS

JAMES
MCNEILL
WHISTLER



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JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER
Pennell Collection, Library of Congress, Washington

*DISTINGUISHED
AMERICAN ARTISTS*

JAMES
McNEILL
WHISTLER

Compiled by
NATHANIEL
POUSETTE-DART

With an introduction by
Joseph & Elizabeth Robbins Pennell



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JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER is the greatest of all American artists, the greatest of all artists of his time. His greatness is not to be accounted for by environment or inheritance. He was born in America at a period when art was an alien in the country; he came of a family of soldiers; he was educated in the Military Academy at West Point; he began his career in a Government office at Washington;—far from those influences known to have made some men artists in spite of themselves. He is, therefore, the most splendid proof of his true belief that “art happens.”

He had at least the advantage of a training in Paris, though it was begun at an age when the average student leaves the schools, and, according to his critics, he profited little by it. Poynter, the industrious Briton, called him the Idle Yankee Apprentice, and this still lingers, though Poynter is near forgotten. But more came of his idleness than of most men's industry, and his early paintings and etchings were the heralds of his greatness—his genius—for from the beginning he was absorbed in the pursuit of beauty. He was an artist born and not a ready-made painter.

In the prevailing idea of him today he was not only the Idle Apprentice but the rebel, posing in his work as the leader of revolt and the enemy of tradition, doing strange things to call attention to himself, as he later did, knowing if he did not he would be ignored or reviled—then none too mean not to revile him, now none to

grand not to toady to him. But there never was an artist whose belief in tradition was so unwavering, whose respect for the art of the past was so strong, whose love for the beautiful was so deep. He would have had no use for the so-called Modernists who are concerned not with art but their escape from it, because otherwise they are failures. He would have had no sympathy with men who, disdaining the beauty created by artists through the ages, attempt self-consciously to return to the gropings of the savage seeking to express what he sees with neither knowledge nor tools—only these latter-day prophets are not savages but incompetents. Whistler's ambition was "to carry on," and if he was not understood by the people in whose midst he lived, the fault was theirs, and theirs the loss. It was a grief to him that he felt bitterly. That was why he laughed, and then they understood him less than ever.

It was not to escape from his responsibility as an artist, not notoriety, not eccentricity he strove for, but beauty always—beauty of design, beauty of line, beauty of colour, beauty of handling, beauty of surface—"the one skin all over it" that delighted him. Not even when he wrote his joyous, cruel letters to the press, or his *Art and Art Critics*, and *The Ten o'Clock*, was he for a moment forgetful of the beauty which he gave to everything he touched, and his *Gentle Art* is not only one of the few great books on art, but a masterpiece of the art of writing. The artists, whether of Paris or Tokio, of Spain or Holland, or even England, who could teach him anything of the beauty he sought were his masters. It is easy to point to this inspiration and that in his prints and paintings, to the debt he owed at the start to Courbet and Fantin, then to Hiroshige and Hokusai at the foot of Fusi-yama,—

easy to trace the influence of the greatest of all, the *Master at Madrid*, the first in his portraits to make men stand upon their feet and to fill his canvasses with atmosphere and light, or his interest in "subject pictures" when painted by Terborch or Titian. Nobody was readier than Whistler to accept the truths these men had taught him and the technical methods they had solved long before. There is the story of him at the very end, old, recovering from a serious illness, standing on a chair in the gallery at Haarlem that he might see and feel the wonderful brushwork of Franz Hals and try to find out how it was done. But always, whatever debt can be discovered, whatever influence traced to the past, he was himself, unmistakable, untiring in his pursuit of beauty, constant in his belief that beauty is the end of art, not "emotions entirely foreign to it"—the faith for which he was ridiculed by the popular Victorian painters of anecdotes, classical, scriptural and domestic, by the up-to-date Americans of today, Victorians too in the valour of their ignorance. He was a realist in his reliance upon Nature; but from Nature it was his right as artist to pick and choose and, spurning the ugly and the vulgar, he chose the beautiful, the exquisite, translating all into "the painter's poetry."

Here is the reason of his greatness. And if we say he was the greatest artist of his time, it is because he succeeded absolutely in his lifelong search, not only in one, but in many mediums. Paint alone could not satisfy him. There were things he could say better in other ways and he was not content until he had tried and mastered them all. He was not a lop-sided painter but a many-sided artist.

In the technique of etching he had been trained in the

Coast Survey office. No sooner was he in Paris than he used this training to begin that long series of etchings which place him above Rembrandt—yes, above Rembrandt, as we know, and the world has begun to know. Never has the etched line expressed form with such mastery. The line is vital, direct, the effect obtained with the utmost rightness. But if Whistler was ever the same in his concern with beauty, he was never man-nered. He might say that there was no change in his work, that the last did not differ from the first. But there was growth—the elaboration of the French Set through the Thames Set, developing into the Venice Set, and then the austere simplicity of the latest again in France. Always, however, in them all was the same vital, expressive line.

He would admit of no change in his painting either, no difference from first to last, but again growth—growth through the period when Courbet fired his enthusiasm and he painted *Alone with the Tide*, *At the Piano*, and *The Music Room*, and showed them, and at once they made for him the reputation which has been rapidly increasing ever since; growth through the period when Japan held him under its spell, and no loveliness was to him as the loveliness of night, the *Japanese Pictures*, with their wealth of beautiful detail, leading to the *Nocturnes*, more eloquent in their simplicity, and to the *Six Projects*, never carried out in the large decorative scheme for which they were the motives; growth through the period when Velasquez claimed his allegiance and he, too, made his men and women stand upon their feet, in air and light. But always and in every period, Whistler is Whistler himself and no one else, always concerned with beauty, always adapting his technique

to express it in its full perfection, his mark set upon the *Mother*, and *Carlyle*, the *Miss Alexander*, and *Rosa Corder* of his young Chelsea days, no less than upon the *Lady Meux*, *Sarasate*, and *Yellow Buskin* of his joyous return from Venice, or the *Little Rose*, and *Master Smith of Lyme Regis*, painted in the sad twilight of his later years.

And so with every other medium. He experimented in lithography and with his first experiments mastered the medium as triumphantly as in the last, beauty ever the aim and the fulfillment of his many portraits as of his impressions of architecture and the Thames he loved. He turned to water-colour and the simplest washes again yielded beauty, whether of the little sun-drenched room, or the rain-washed English skies, or the red roofs nestling in the sand dunes of Holland. He took up pastel at the darkest moment of his life and, once at work, drawing on sheets of tinted paper with a few colours, his own most sad misfortunes could not dull his eyes to the vision of beauty in Venice, nor stay his hand in the rendering of the life around him.

In his study of Beauty throught every period and in every medium, Whistler gained power with the passing of the years. The Ists of our degenerate days would appropriate "expressionism" as their monopoly, certain that no artists every sought to express themselves before. But Whistler was the true expressionist—even the unimpressed and the expressionless have to accept him—unceasing in his endeavour to express himself in terms of beauty, for to him art and beauty were inseparable. And he knew there could be no beauty, no art, without refinement, without delicacy, without perfection. In his words, art is a dainty goddess; also a jealous mistress, demanding

the artist's unswerving devotion, and all the labour of his days, her servant and her master. He gave her both without reserve. And yet, it was only at the end of his life that he felt he was at the beginning of his knowledge and his accomplishment. He, who was looked upon by his contemporaries as irresponsible and a charlatan in his art, was the most thorough, the most hard-working, the most persevering of all artists, understanding the truth that genius without industry is of no avail. To the revelation of beauty in his art his time and his energies were consecrated, and the reward of this consecration was the success that endures.

Only in his own country has the generous recognition, the worthy tribute been slow in coming. He is not yet in the Hall of Fame among the great American artists, of some of whom few ever heard. But the great art and the great literature he created honour him more than any bust. And today he, like Lincoln, has his monument in Washington—in the Library of Congress and the Freer Gallery—but few know and fewer care. However, as we wrote in our *Life of Whistler*, "His name and his fame will live forever."

J. and E. R. PENNELL,

Authors of the "Authorized
Life of Whistler" and the
"Whistler Journal."

*The sixty-four paintings herein reproduced illustrate
the varied characteristics of this artist's work.*



LA MERE GERARD
Owned' by A. Edward Newton, Esq.



PORTRAIT OF LUKE A. IONIDES
Owned by the Estate of Luke A. Ionides



THE MUSIC ROOM

*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



THE COAST OF BRITTANY
Courtesy of the C. W. Kraushaar Art Galleries



LA PRINCESSE DU PAYS DE LA PORCELAINE
*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



AT THE PIANO
Owncd by Edmund Davis, Esq.



THE WHITE GIRL
(Symphony in White, No. I)
Owned by Harris Whittemore, Esq.



THE LITTLE WHITE GIRL
(Symphony in White, No. II)

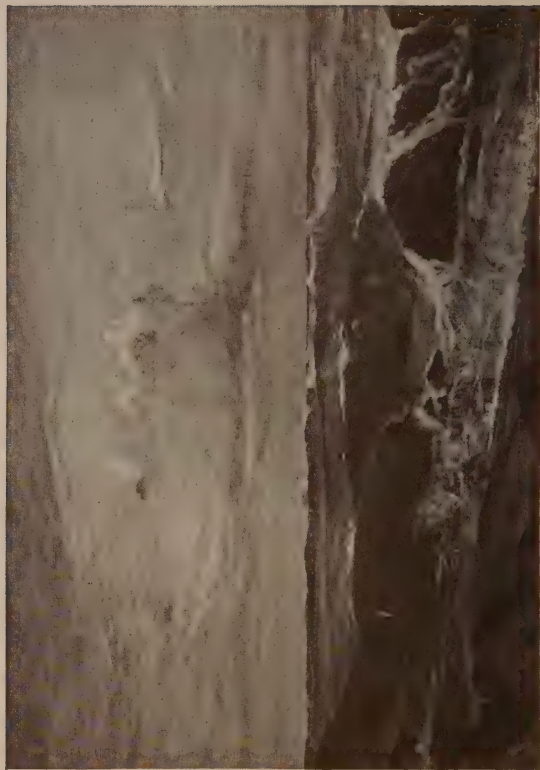


THE THAMES IN ICE

*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



WAPPING
Owned by Mrs. Hutton



from "The Life of Whistler," by E. R. & J. Pennell

BLUE AND SILVER, THE BLUE WAVE PAINTING

Owned by A. A. Pope, Esq.

Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott Co.



THE LAST OF OLD WESTMINSTER
Owned by the Estate of A. A. Pope



THE BALCONY

(Variations in Flesh Color and Green)

*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



SYMPHONY IN WHITE, No. III
Owned by Edmund Davis, Esq.



THE GOLD SCREEN
*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



DIE LANGE LEIZEN, OF THE SIX MARKS
(Purple and Rose)

Owned by the John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, Pa.



NOCTURNE--BLUE AND GOLD--VALPARAISO
*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*

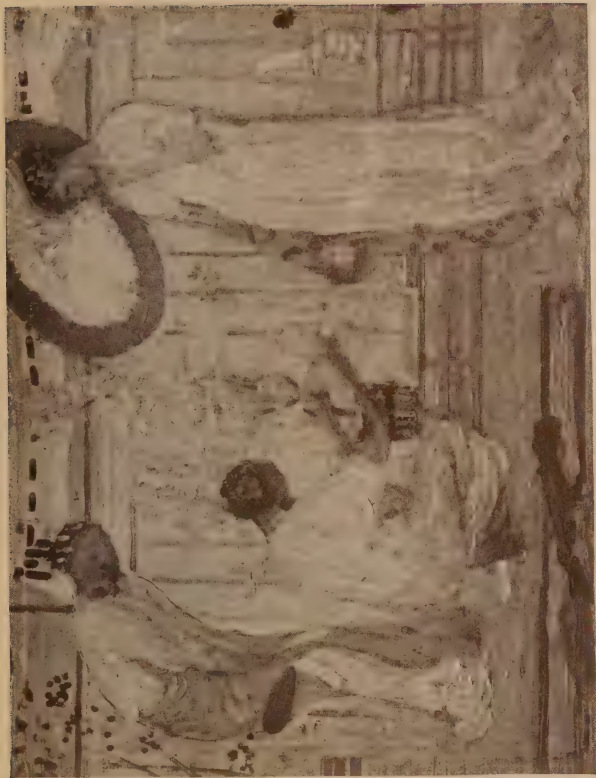


THE OCEAN

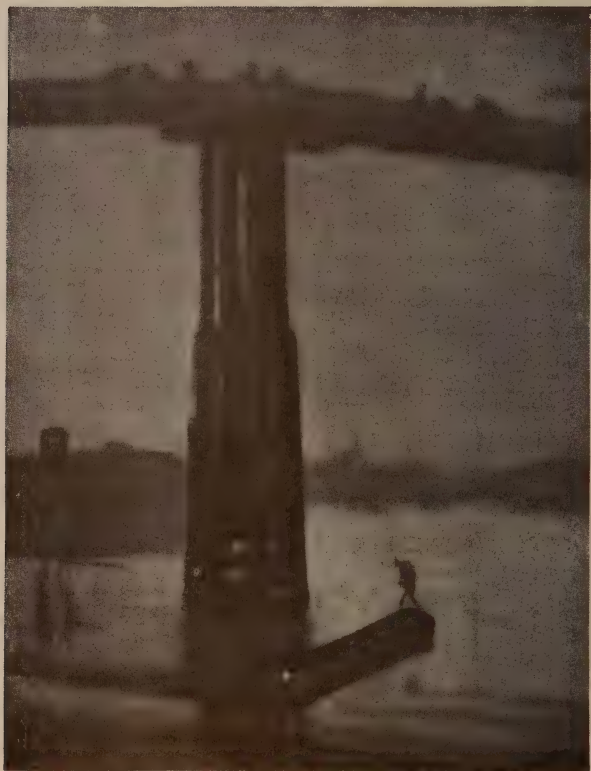
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Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



WHISTLER IN HIS STUDIO
Owned by the Chicago Art Institute



THE WHITE SYMPHONY—THREE GIRLS
Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.



OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE
Owned by the Tate Gallery, London



NOCTURNE ARRANGEMENT IN GREY AND GOLD
*Owned by Harris Whittemore, Esq.
Courtesy M. Knodler & Co.*



PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S MOTHER
Owned by Luxembourg Gallery, Paris



PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CARLYLE
Owned by the Glasgow Art Gallery



PORTRAIT OF MISS ALEXANDER
(Harmony in Grey and Green)
Owned by the Tate Gallery, London



PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST
Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott Co.



PORTRAIT OF F. R. LEYLAND

*Owned by
Smithsonian Institution,
Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



MRS. F. R. LEYLAND
(Symphony in Flesh Color and Pink)
Owned by the Frick Collection, New York



PORTRAIT OF MISS KINSELLA

Owned by Miss Kinseila

Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott Co.



THE FALLING ROCKET
(Nocturne in Black and Gold)
*Owned by Mrs. Samuel Untermeyer
Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott Co.*



ROSA CORDER

*Owned by the Frick Collection, New York
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



THE FUR JACKET

*Owned by the Worcester Art Museum
Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery*



CREMORNE GARDENS No. 2
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum

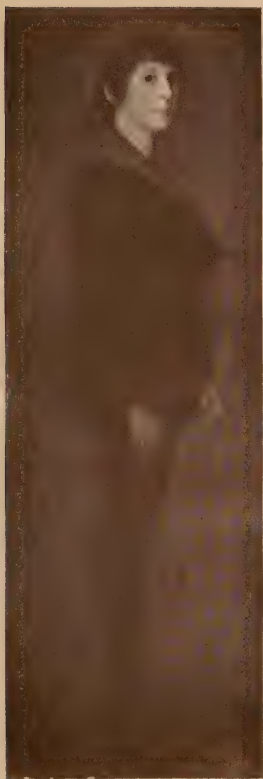


PORTRAIT OF PABLO SARASATE
Owned by the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh



THE LADY WITH THE YELLOW BUSKIN
(Lady Archibald Campbell)

Owned by the Pennsylvania Museum, Willstack Collection, Philadelphia



LADY ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL AS ORLANDO
Owned by the Ralston Gallery



SIR HENRY IRVING AS PHILIP II OF SPAIN
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum



THÉODORE DURET
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum



CONNIE GILCHRIST
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum



Photograph by Katherine E. McClellan

PORTRAIT OF MRS. LEWIS JARVIS
*Owned by the Hillyer Art Gallery, Smith College
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



ROSE AND GOLD
(Lady Sophie of Soho)

*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



DAUGHTER OF THE CONCIERGE
*Owned by Theodore T. Ellis, Esq.
Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery*



TRAFALGAR SQUARE
Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.



MARINE
Owned by the Cincinnati Museum



MISS LILLIAN WOAKES

*Owned by the Phillip Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



BLEU ET VIOLET
(La Belle de Jour)
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.



THE WHITE LADY

Owned by John F. Braun, Esq.

Courtesy of the C. W. Kraushaar Art Galleries



L'AMERICAINE

*Owned by Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.*



LA NAPOLITAINE ROSE ET OR
(Madam Carmen)
*Owned by George H. Webster, Esq.
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



EDWARD G. KENNEDY
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum



VIOLINIST
Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery



MRS. WALTER SICKERT
*Owned by Mr. Harold Somers, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*

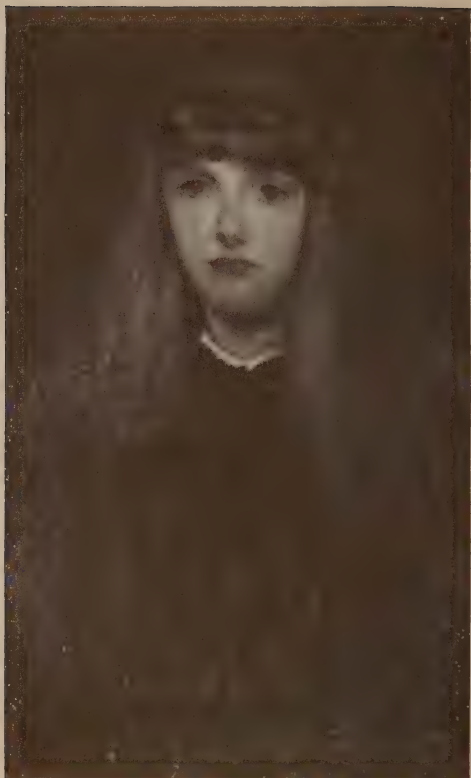


THE MASTER SMITH OF LYNE REGIS
Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



LE COMTE ROBERT

*Owned by the Frick Collection, New York
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



GIRL IN BLACK

(Pouting Tom)

*Owned by H. H. Benidict, New York City
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*



LITTLE ROSE OF LYNE REGIS
Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



LADY IN GRAY
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum



PRETTY NELLIE BROWN
*Owned by Frank Lusk Babbott, Esq.
Courtesy of Moffat, Yard & Co.*



THE BLUE BONNET
*Owned by Mrs. Herbert L. Pratt
Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery*



PORTRAIT STUDY



THE WIDOW

*Owned by the Worcester Art Museum
Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery*



PORTRAIT OF RICHARD CANFIELD
*Owned by the Cincinnati Art Museum Association
Courtesy M. Knoedler & Co.*

WHISTLER, JAMES McNEILL, Painter and etcher, born at Lowell, Mass., July 10, 1834, died 1903. Studied in Paris.

MEMBER OF

LEGION OF HONOR, *Chevalier*, 1889, *Officer*, 1892
SOCIÉTÉ NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS
ROYAL ACADEMIE OF ST. LUKE, Rome—*Hon. Member*
ORDER OF THE CROWN OF ITALY—*Commander*
ROYAL ACADEMY OF BAVARIA—*Hon. Member*
ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL, Bavaria—*Chevalier*
ROYAL ACADEMY OF DRESDEN—*Hon. Member*
ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY—*Hon. Member*
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SCULPTORS, PAINTERS AND GRAVERS—*First President*
LL.D. OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY.

AWARDS

Portrait of Mother admitted under protest (1872) to Royal Academy Exhibition. Exhibited (1884) at Paris Salon, awarded Medal of 3rd Class. Bought (1891) by French Government for Luxembourg Gallery.
Medal, Paris, 3rd Class, 1883.
Elected (1886) President of the Society of British Artists.
Made Member of Munich Academy (1889) and received Cross of Order of St. Michael.
Grand Prix, Paris, 1900.
Gold Medal at Paris, Venice, Munich, Amsterdam, Chicago, Philadelphia, Antwerp, Dresden, etc.

REPRESENTED IN

BROOKLYN MUSEUM.
CARNEGIE INSTITUTE, PITTSBURGH.
CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE.
CINCINNATI MUSEUM.
FREER GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D. C.
THE FRICK COLLECTION, NEW YORK.
GLASGOW CORPORATION ART GALLERY.
HACKLEY GALLERY, MUSKEGON, MICH.
HILLYER ART GALLERY, SMITH COLLEGE.
HIS MAJESTY'S COLLECTION, WINDSOR.
JOHN G. JOHNSON COLLECTION, PHILADELPHIA.
LUXEMBOURG MUSEUM, PARIS.
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK.
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.
RYKS MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.
TATE GALLERY, LONDON.
WILSTUCK COLLECTION, PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.
WORCESTER ART MUSEUM.

PUBLISHED MATTER

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ARRANGEMENT IN PINK AND PURPLE
Owned by the Cincinnati Museum



STUDY IN ROSE AND BROWN

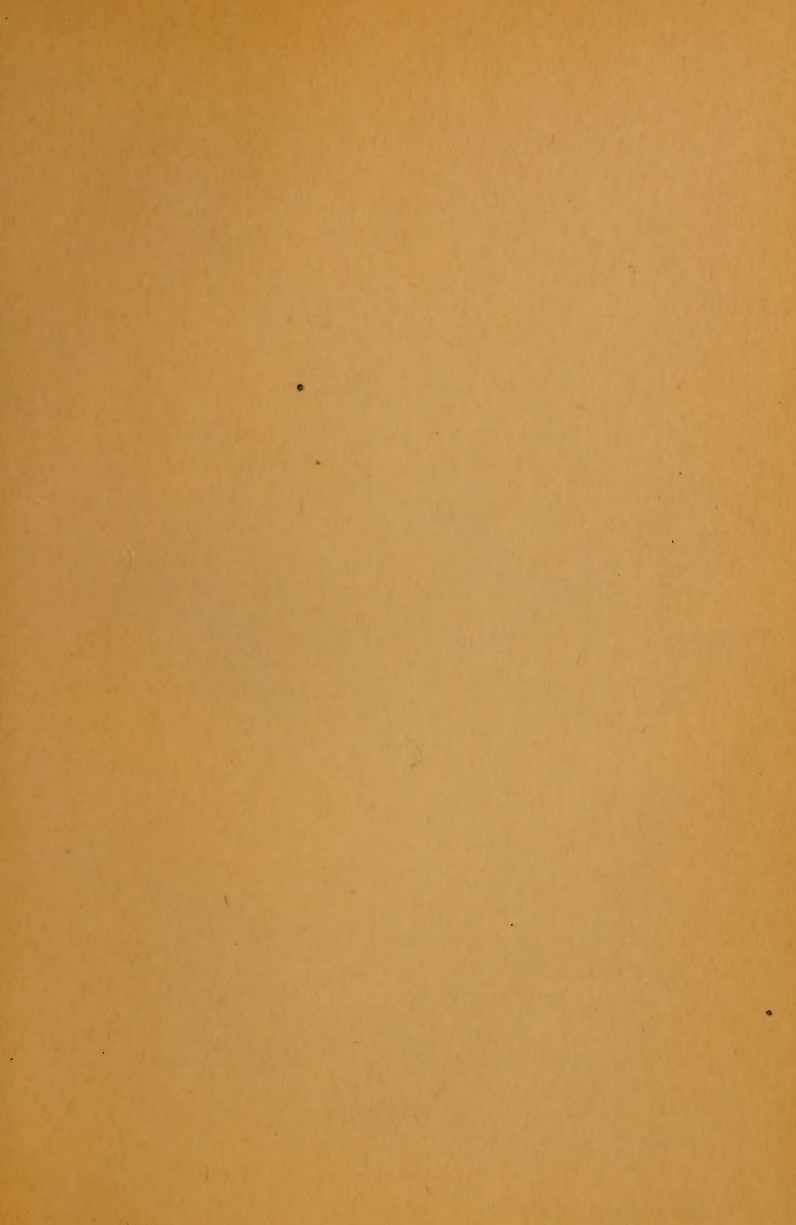
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Courtesy of the Macbeth Gallery*

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